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THE STORY OF MOZART'S REQUIEM.

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thor of Essays on "The Musical Scale," "On Musical Instruments,"
"On Mozart's Overture to *Die Zauberflöte*," &c. &c.

"OPUS SUMMUM, VIRI SUMMI." "The greatest of all works, by the greatest of all masters!" Thus wrote Hiller, the elder, of Leipsic, in letters an inch high, on the title-page of a score of Mozart's Requiem which he had reverently copied out, note for note, with his own hand.

Hiller was one of Sebastian Bach's successors, and Mendelssohn's predecessors, as director of the renowned music school of St. Thomas, and he was no mean authority. But the lapse of three-quarters of a century has amply confirmed his opinion, both as to the work and the master. The universal homage of educated musicians has agreed in installing Mozart as the *vir summus* of musical composers; while all who can appreciate the grand and the beautiful in music, must concur in designating this as his *opus summum*, the last and greatest emanation of his wonderful genius, the crowning glory of his immortal career.

But independently of its value as a musical composition, the Requiem has great interest on account of its very remarkable history. The mysterious commission given for it;—the supernatural impression made by this on Mozart;—his composition of the work, under such pathetic circumstances, partly on his death-bed;—the difficulties as to its publication;—the fierce controversy as to its authorship which, for fourteen years, engaged the attention of some of the most learned men and the most profound musicians of Europe;—the extraordinary disappearance and long concealment of the manuscripts;—their ultimate discovery;—the difficult and perplexing questions as to their genuineness;—the strange revelations gradually made as to the secret history of the various transactions;—and the doubts which, after all possible information has been obtained, still hang over the authorship of some parts of the work;—all these things, spread over seventy or eighty years, and referring to one of the most esteemed compositions known, form a story of unparalleled interest in the annals of music.

The object of the present essay is to tell this story, which is hitherto unpublished, and, to a great extent, unknown in this country. The general impressions about the history of the Requiem are not in accordance with the facts, many of which have, indeed, only been brought to light at a comparatively recent date. The essay has been carefully compiled from the best and most authentic German sources, and, wherever practicable, the original documents have been referred to.*

The history is a somewhat difficult one to relate; for, in order to render intelligible the proceedings during the greater part of the time, it is necessary to keep back some of the earliest incidents, the knowledge of which did not transpire till the end. It is, in this respect, like a novel, the interest of which hangs on a mystery only revealed in the last chapter.

* A list of works in which the subject is treated of, is given at the end of the essay.

It will be desirable to divide the history into three portions; comprising (1) the early circulation and publication of the Requiem; (2) the great controversy as to the authorship; and (3) the discovery of the original manuscript, and the latest revelations as to the early events. After these it will be convenient to add (4) a brief connected account of the facts ultimately revealed; and (5) a specific indication of the evidence regarding the authorship of the various portions of the work.

CHAP. I.—Early Circulation and Publication of the Requiem. 1791 to 1824.

MOZART'S Requiem was first introduced to the public by a performance of it in Jahn's Hall, at Vienna, soon after the composer's death, which happened on the 5th December, 1791. It attracted great attention, the hall being densely crowded; and there can be little doubt that additional interest and curiosity had been excited by a pretty general knowledge of certain remarkable circumstances connected with its origin.

Mozart had undertaken the work on a commission received by the hands of an unknown messenger, whose strange garb and manner, and whose mysterious and sudden re-appearance from time to time, had made so strong an impression on the composer's mind as to induce him to see, in the circumstance, a supernatural warning of his own approaching decease, and to lead him to the firm conviction that the work he was about to write would be his own funeral dirge. Under this impression, he worked at the composition with almost superhuman effort, and, as many believed, with almost superhuman power. His forebodings proved but too prophetic; death seized him almost with the pen in his hand; and the re-appearance, soon afterwards, of the mysterious stranger to claim and carry off the score, and the failure of all attempts to trace him or the copy, or to find any clue to the mystery, gave a fit completion to the marvellous story.

In spite, however, of the professed disappearance of the score, the inconsolable widow contrived to produce a copy, either of the Requiem composed by her husband or of something resembling it, and it was from this copy, and for her own benefit, that the public performance took place. The work was much admired, and became very popular. The widow soon evinced an anxiety to turn this popularity to advantage; and presuming that the supernatural proprietor, by whom the Requiem had been purchased, would not be very fastidious in the matter of copyright, she began to speculate on the possibility of selling it again for publication. It was about to be performed at Leipsic for her benefit, and she embraced the opportunity of offering the work, along with other compositions of her husband's, to Messrs. Breitkopf and Härtel, the celebrated publishers there. She had a score with her, which she declared was the original manuscript, and a copy of this was made (probably the one written out by Hiller himself) while she remained in the town. It does not appear that Breitkopf and Härtel retained any authentic copy at this time; no doubt they had scruples about their right to publish, and nothing more was then done.

But the widow, nothing daunted, determined to make money by the Requiem in some way or other, and adopted the expedient of having manuscript copies made, which she sold in all directions, one of

them being bought by the King of Prussia for 200 Friedrichs d'or. This went on for some years, but the circulation was limited; and the widow again turned her attention towards increasing her profits by publication. She appears a second time to have entered into communication with the Leipsic publishers on the subject, and to have discussed with them the question of the claims of the Unknown; and the idea occurred to her that by making a public appeal to this mysterious personage, he might be induced to forego his rights in her favour. With this view she drafted an advertisement, which she afterwards communicated to Härtel, and which, for the ingenuity with which it is worded, deserves translation. It runs as follows:—

"As the honourable Unknown, who gave to the blessed Mozart, a few months before his death, the commission to compose a Requiem, has not, after the lapse of more than seven years, made it publicly known, the widow looks upon this circumstance with gratitude as a proof that he is willing to allow her to obtain some advantage by its publication. But she considers it her duty, as a greater security to herself, and as a consequence of the sentiments she entertains towards him, to call upon the honourable gentleman, by the medium of the journals of Vienna, Hamburg, and Frankfurt, to let her know his intentions within the space of three months, after which time she will venture to publish the Requiem among the collected works of her departed husband."

This diplomatic address was not inserted, for it appears the publishers now ventured to take the risk on themselves. They were, however, very desirous that the work should be brought out with all possible correctness; and, although several transcripts had come into their hands, they applied to the widow for her copy.

But there was another point on which they desired to be satisfied. She had declared, on a former occasion, that the Requiem had been entirely completed by Mozart before he died; but some suspicions of the accuracy of this statement had reached them, and, in a business-like way, they demanded explanations. In answer to these enquiries, the widow wrote, on the 27th March, 1799, as follows:—

"As to the Requiem, it is true that I possess the celebrated one which my husband wrote shortly before his death. I know of no Requiem but this; and declare all others to be spurious. To what extent it is his own composition—it is so to near the end—I will inform you when you receive it from me. The circumstances were as follows. When he saw his end approaching, he spoke with Herr Süßmayer, the present Imperial Capellmeister, and requested him, if he should die without finishing it, to repeat the first fugue in the last part, as is customary; and told him, also, how he should develop the conclusion, of which the principal *motivi* were here and there already carried out in some of the parts (*wovon aber die Hauptsache hier und da in Stimmen schon ausgeführt war*). And this Herr Süßmayer actually did."

The publishers do not seem to have been quite satisfied with this explanation, and they afterwards pressed her for further information; when she referred them to Süßmayer. They accordingly, being determined to sift the matter as far as was in their power, applied to him, requesting him to state what he knew about the composition of the Requiem. He answered, promptly, in a letter dated 8th February, 1800, and which is one of the most important documents connected with the history, as putting forward a definite claim on his part, to a considerable share in the composition of the Requiem. On this account we shall translate it entire; but it is necessary, in the first place, to say something as to who the person was who thus presumed to make himself a fellow-worker with the greatest composer of the age.

François Xavier Süßmayer, born in 1766, in a little village of Upper Austria, was admitted, as a boy, into the choir of the celebrated Benedictine Abbey of Kremsmunster, and studied under Pasterwitz, a pupil of Eberlin, a profound theorist, and an intimate friend of Mozart and Haydn. While very

young, Süßmayer tried his hand successfully in all branches of composition, and wrote symphonies, and vocal compositions in many parts, which early gave him much practice. Arriving in Vienna, he took further lessons under Salieri, and formed a close friendship with Mozart, whose success stimulated his *amour propre*. Immediately after Mozart's death, he obtained the position of *chef d'orchestre* at the National Theatre, in Vienna, and two years afterwards he was also appointed second *chef* of the court orchestra. He was drawn by Shikaneder, the opera director at Vienna, into a dissipated course of living, which destroyed his already weak health, and he died, in that city, in 1803. He wrote, among other things, a dramatic oratorio, *Moses*, and a great number of operas, one of which was represented at Prague in 1794, for the anniversary of the emperor's birthday, and had a brilliant success. Some of these, and some of his cantatas, have been published.

To render Süßmayer's important letter clear in certain parts, where he describes Mozart's and his own share in the transaction, it may be explained that, although the Requiem contains thirteen "numbers" or separate movements, the text really consists of only five distinct parts, or chief divisions, viz.:—

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| I.—Requiem and Kyrie. Comprising movement No. 1. | |
| II.—Dies Iræ. Comprising six movements:— | |
| No. 2. Dies Iræ. | No. 5. Recordare. |
| 3. Tuba mirum. | 6. Confutatis. |
| 4. Rex tremendæ. | 7. Lacrymosa. |
| III.—Domine. Comprising two movements:— | |
| No. 8. Domine. | No. 9. Hostias. |
| IV.—Sanctus. Comprising two movements:— | |
| No. 10. Sanctus. | No. 11. Benedictus. |
| V.—Agnus Dei. Comprising two movements:— | |
| No. 12. Agnus Dei. | No. 13. Lux æterna. |

Süßmayer's letter to Messrs. Breitkopf and Härtel ran as follows:—

"Your kind letter of 24th January has given me the greatest pleasure, as I gather from it that you set too much store on the estimation of the German public, to mislead them by works which ought not to be set down entirely to the account of my departed friend Mozart. I owe too much to the instruction of this great man that I should silently allow a composition, the greater part of which is my work, to be given out for his, as I am firmly convinced that my work is unworthy of this great man. Mozart's composition is so unique, and, I venture to assert, so unattainable by the greater part of living composers, that every imitator attempting to pass off his work for that of Mozart, would come worse off than the crow in the fable, who decked himself in peacock's feathers.

I will now state how it happened that the completion of the Requiem, which is the subject of our correspondence, came to be entrusted to me. Mozart's widow could well foresee that the posthumous works of her husband would be sought after. Death surprised him while he was yet working at this Requiem. The completion of the work was, for this reason, offered to several masters; some of them could not undertake the work on account of pressing engagements, and others would not compromise themselves by the comparison of their talents with those of Mozart. At last it came to me, as it was known that while Mozart was yet alive, I had often played and sung through with him the parts he had already set to music—that he had very often conversed with me upon the development of the work, and had communicated to me the principal features (*den Gang und die Gründe*) of his instrumentation. I can only wish that I may have succeeded, or at least may have so worked that competent critics may here and there find in what I have done, some traces of his never to be forgotten teaching.

"To the *Requiem*, with the *Kyrie*, the *Dies Iræ*, and the *Domine Jesu*, Mozart has fully completed the four vocal parts and the fundamental bass, with the figuring; but he has only here and there indicated the *motivi* for the instrumentation. In the *Dies Iræ*, his last verse was *Qua resurget ex favilla*, and his work was the same as in the first pieces. From the verse *Judicandus homo reus*, &c., forwards, I have entirely finished the *Dies Iræ*. The *Sanctus*, *Benedictus*, and *Agnus Dei*, are entirely my own composition (*ganz neu von mir verfertigt*); but I have taken the liberty, in order to give the work more uniformity, to repeat the fugue of the *Kyrie* to the verse *Cum sanctis*, &c.

"I shall be heartily glad if I have been of any slight service to you by this communication."

This statement, which differed essentially from that of the widow, could not have been very satisfactory to Messrs. Breitkopf and Härtel. The lat-

ter part indeed did not bear out the early sweeping assertion, that "the greater part of the Requiem was Süssmayer's work;" but still it seriously called its integrity in question, and, even if true, left very uncertain what the extent of Mozart's work really was. But the firm had exhausted all the sources of information open to them, and they could do no more. They had already, in 1799, advertized that they were about "to publish Mozart's Requiem, his last and most perfect composition, according to the manuscript belonging to his widow, furnished to them for that purpose;" and now they accordingly proceeded to bring out the score, which, printed from the widow's copy, appeared in 1800. It does not appear that they allowed the published copy to bear any notice of the statements which had come to their knowledge respecting its authorship; perhaps they did not place sufficient confidence in them to warrant their so doing; but with an honourable desire to protect themselves against any charge of misrepresentation, they, almost contemporaneously with the bringing out of the Requiem, published Süssmayer's letter, in the *Allgemeine Musikalische Zeitung*, the chief musical periodical of Europe, and announced that the score had been received from him. They remarked however, (probably with the object of throwing some doubt on Süssmayer's assertions) their surprise at his statement, that the unfinished copy which came into his hands had the thorough bass figured, whereas among the very large number of Mozart's MSS., they had seen, not a single one had this addition. They also added an obscure hint, "that Süssmayer's already known works subjected his claim, as regards the Requiem, to a somewhat severe criticism," which, however, they did not further go into.

About this time, another important incident occurred; for the widow, who had speculated pretty deeply on the forbearance of the unknown owner of the Requiem, found, to her considerable alarm, that he was no ghost, but a real human personage, who was not only very jealous of his earthly interests, but actually employed a lawyer to protect them! However, as the little unpleasantness consequent on this discovery was carefully hushed up, and only came to public knowledge long afterwards, we may reserve our account of it till we come to the occurrences which caused its disclosure.

In 1798, an interesting series of memoranda, entitled "Aus Mozart's Leben," were published in the *Leipziger Allgemeine Musikalische Zeitung*, by Friedrich Rochlitz, a councillor of state at Saxe-Weimar, and much esteemed as a musical critic. He gave a tolerably circumstantial account of the mysterious circumstances attending the origin of the Requiem, the most important part of which, as bearing on our present story, is the statement, that "after the second appearance of the messenger, Mozart set himself more earnestly than ever to the work, and in less than four weeks he was ready (or he had completed it, *ist er fertig*); but he had fallen asleep!

In 1813, Gerber published his celebrated Biographical Lexicon of Musicians, in which he gave a notice of Mozart's life, and mentioned the Requiem. He said, that the messenger presented himself again, immediately after Mozart's death, to claim his copy, and received it unfinished; but that since that time Süssmayer had added the instrumental parts where they were wanting, and that thus the score had come into public possession.

These statements differed essentially from Süssmayer's as to the share which he had had in the composition. According to Rochlitz, confirmed by the widow's first assertion, the score had been actually finished by Mozart; and even according to Gerber (who agreed more with her modified statement to Breitkopf and Härtel) Süssmayer had only filled in the instrumentation. His claims had been doubted at the time, as no corroborative evidence for them had been forthcoming; and after his death, in 1803, his connection with the work was soon forgotten altogether.

Copies of the Requiem were published in various forms, and widely circulated, all bearing Mozart's name without any qualification; the frequent performances tended further to establish the connection; and thus the opinion became confirmed that the work had proceeded, perfect and entire, from Mozart's own hand. This state of things lasted for a quarter of a century, when the faith of the musical public suddenly received a rude shock from a very unexpected quarter; and the history of the Requiem became entangled in a more intricate web than ever.

(To be continued.)

INCIDENTS IN THE LIFE OF BEETHOVEN.

By R. M. HAYLEY.

(Continued from p. 540, Vol. 13.)

Beethoven's keen sense of right was never more deeply wounded than when he found himself deceived in the character of a man with whom he had been long on friendly terms. The lawsuit in which he was involved with Mälzel, a brother artist in Vienna, concluded with a kind of compromise, by which Beethoven consented to let the matter end on paying half the costs. His composition, *The battle of Vittoria*, which was to be performed during the congress of Vienna, gave rise to this litigation. It appears, from a full statement of the case which Beethoven drew up for his counsel, that spontaneously, and without any remuneration, he had composed a Battle Symphony which, it was afterwards agreed, should be adapted to a full orchestra, and performed, together with other of Beethoven's works, at a concert for the benefit of the soldiers wounded in the war. Beethoven happened at the time to be in great want of money. A loan of fifty ducats was therefore offered to him by Mälzel and accepted. On the strength of this disbursement, although the money was soon repaid, Mälzel affected to consider the Symphony as a present from Beethoven, and announced it publicly as his own property. He then took it to Munich, where he had it performed, and afterwards forwarded it to London. Indignant at such dishonourable conduct, Beethoven published a protest which he circulated amongst the members of the musical profession. The composition, which had been the cause of so much vexation, was produced in September, 1814, while the Congress was assembled at Vienna, and the author received, in acknowledgment of its merits, many marks of distinction. The Empress of Russia made him a present of 200 ducats, and a society of amateurs in England sent him a valuable pianoforte, made by one of the first manufacturers in the country. The magistracy of Vienna presented him with the freedom of the city; and the association of amateurs in the Austrian dominions elected him an honorary member. A similar distinction was conferred upon him by the Philharmonic